

*City of Taunton  
Office of the Mayor*



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**Mayor O'Connell and Taunton Opiate Task Force Recognize International  
Overdose Awareness Day**

Taunton, MA...Today Mayor Shaunna O'Connell joined the Taunton Opiate Task Force (TOTF) in recognizing International Overdose Awareness Day.

"Far too many families have lost loved ones due to substance use. That's why it is important to bring awareness and work to remove the stigma of substance use so more people will not suffer in silence. We need to offer hope and treatment as a message," said O'Connell.

"By ensuring access to treatment, our administration will work to build upon the positive impact the task force has made in our city," said O'Connell.

To recognize those impacted by substance use, 165 flags will be placed at City Hall acknowledging those who have overdosed in the City of Taunton during 2019. Out of these 165 overdoses, 144 were non-fatal and will be represented by purple flags. The 21 fatal overdoses will be represented with red flags. There will be a banner placed outside of City Hall for families to leave messages.

"Our family has lived through the terror that drug addiction afflicts. That's why we started Cory's Cause to help other Taunton families that are suffering. We are glad to be here with Mayor O'Connell in promoting more awareness on preventing drug overdose," said Lori Gonsalves, co-chair of TOTF.

"Preventing deaths is our top goal for the Taunton Opiate Task Force. Today's awareness day helps educate people in need to seek help and end their silent suffering. I am pleased that Mayor O'Connell is working proactively with us to turn the tide on this terrible epidemic," said Kiara Zea, PFS Taunton Program Coordinator of SSTAR.

The flags and banner will be displayed at the Temporary City Hall at 141 Oak Street from Monday August 24<sup>th</sup> until Monday August 31<sup>st</sup>. Families are encouraged to drive by during this time to see the memorial displayed.

Due to the Covid pandemic and in order to keep all our citizens as safe as possible, the awareness ceremony has been pre-recorded and will be aired by TCAM.

City of Taunton International Overdose Awareness Day air times:

Tuesday, August 25th at 8pm

Wednesday, August 26th at 7am & 3:30pm

Friday, August 28th at 8pm

Monday, August 31st at 12 noon and 7:05pm

TCAM TV can be watched on Comcast channel 15 and Verizon channel 22.

The video will be available online via TCAM TV's Facebook page and website

<https://www.tcamtv.com/> by Wednesday, August 26th.

If you or someone you know is struggling with a substance use disorder and are looking for resources:

- CCBC: (508)828-9116
- Learn to Cope: 508-738-5148
- Manet: (508) 822-5500
- SSTAR: (508) 679-5222
- Taunton Opens Doors to Recovery Drop-in Center: Baptist Church of all Nations, 61 Winthrop Street Taunton 02780, the second Thursday of every month from 5:30pm-8:00pm. Follow on Facebook @ Taunton Opens Doors to Recovery.

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